

ng College (Cunningham)

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LENDING

NEW JERSEY COLLEGES:

CAREER BUILDERS

Union, Monmouth, Jersey City and Trenton Junior Colleges Are Modern Institutions Geared to Serve a Community's Needs at a Cost Community Residents Can Afford

By **JOHN T. CUNNINGHAM**

COLLEGE education for great numbers of young men and women often pivots on a very simple point: Is there a chance to get started? One of the encouraging positive answers of the 20th century has been the junior college, particularly where it is dedicated to serving community needs at a price the community residents can afford.

The "chance" can be many things, some of them viewed with uplifted eyebrows by educational classicists. It can be a chance to work days and go to school nights, a chance to save expenses by living at home, a chance to get a foot in the college door despite a so-so high school record. It can be the chance to prepare for a career in two years instead of four. It can be the opportunity for a bright student to get two years of education at very low cost before transferring

to a four-year college where the price of education often is as high as its quality.

A significant number of educational thinkers believe strongly that the junior college may be the best solution to the desperate problem of higher education apparently facing New Jersey in the coming decade. One plan long under consideration by the State Department of Education calls for 10 new public junior colleges located at strategic points in the state. Those in favor base their reasoning on arguments going back to earliest junior college days.

WILLIAM RAINEY HARPER, president of the University of Chicago, launched the junior college movement in 1896. He felt a system of two-year units (including the freshman and sophomore years) would permit estab-

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This is the 25th in a series of articles which not only describe New Jersey's colleges and universities, but tell the story of the growth and traditions of individual colleges within the state, picture their roles in modern education and explain how they plan to meet what has been called "an impending tide of students."

Next Sunday: Graduate Studies.



Through these doors pass students of Trenton Junior College which, with the city-operated School of Industrial Arts, is co-occupant of building at W. State and Willow Sts., a block from the State Capitol.



A pep rally at Jersey City Junior College, organized in 1946 to accommodate returned veterans unable to enter jammed senior schools.



Future site of Union Junior College, which expects to be in new home on its silver anniversary, is on Springfield Ave., Cranford.

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lished colleges and universities to concentrate on advanced studies and research while the broad, basic work was developed in the first two years. Harper thought in terms of a program embracing "junior" and "senior" colleges within the traditional overall four-year framework.

Those who encourage junior colleges as a fundamental part of New Jersey's program of public higher education point out that virtually all college curricula today are divided into Harper's two parts—basic studies the first two (junior) years, concentration within a field the last two (senior) years. They argue such basic studies can be given in junior colleges without the necessity of expensive laboratories and equipment needed for concentration in the last two years.

However, junior colleges have gone well beyond the point of being mere feeders for senior colleges. There is an awareness that many careers do not require four years of college, even though they call for solid preparation beyond high school. Junior colleges seem to be an answer to training various types of engineering technicians, medical or technical secretaries, laboratory assistants, nurses, and so on. Most of the requirements of such careers are very well met by two years of college, plus professional on-the-job specialization.

OF New Jersey's nine junior colleges, only those at Jersey City and Trenton are publicly supported. Two others, Union and Monmouth junior colleges, began with federal funds but are now private colleges (with Monmouth still getting some financial help from Monmouth County freeholders). These four, however, are all "community" colleges in that their philosophies are directed toward serving their immediately surrounding areas. Since the experiences of these four might serve as a pattern if additional junior colleges are founded, they are here considered together.

That doesn't mean these four are alike, except in general principles. It doesn't mean they are related, except in friendly exchange of ideas and philosophies. If they are one in any way, it is in the type of student they attract—usually intense, usually keenly eager to grasp opportunity, usually too busy to be Joe College and usually completely dependent on himself to make his financial way.

Union and Monmouth do have a common heritage. Both started in the darkest days of the depression, at a time when gloom had a front-row seat at every high school graduation. If parents of today fret because their sons must choose between the Army or college, at least there is a choice. A high school graduate of the early 1930s had no choice—very seldom could he afford college, less seldom could he get a job. He had leisure to the point of dangerous, degrading boredom.

Simultaneously, many trained teachers and college professors found



Concentrating on career or profession, the "jaycee" student makes full use of library facilities as at Union . . .

themselves squeezed out of employment. Dr. Arthur L. Johnson, superintendent of Union County schools, asked why federal funds couldn't be used to bring unemployed students and idle teachers together in public junior colleges held evenings in high schools. Dr. Johnson appointed a committee—predominantly Republican, by the way—to urge New Deal funds for the idea.

Washington (in the person of the late Harry Hopkins, then head of the Emergency Relief Administration) liked the idea. There was no precedent, but funds were made available late in the summer of 1933. Union Junior College thus became the first junior college in the United States to be established with federal funds. On Oct. 16, 1933, Union started with 243 students enrolled in night classes at Roselle High School.

OTHER New Jersey counties moved rapidly to adopt the plan. Within six weeks of Union's announcement New Jersey had four federally financed junior colleges and before Washington money (for education) ran out in 1936, ERA junior colleges had operated in Union, Morris, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic and Essex counties.

Even within three years the federally financed junior colleges proved their worth. More than 3,000 young men and women enrolled for the second full year in 1934. Hundreds eventually transferred their credits to senior colleges. Today many highly successful New Jersey residents cheerfully agree that those ERA junior colleges meant the possible difference between disaster and success. Despite some bitter charges of "boondoggling" at the time, that junior college financing may have been some of the best spent federal money of all times.

Popular momentum (plus some very real faculty sacrifices) kept Union, Monmouth and Morris junior colleges going as private institutions after Washington withdrew support. Morris finally ceased functioning in 1943 after World War II depleted faculty and student body to the point where

there could be no continuance. Union and Monmouth managed to survive the blow and came into full-blown vigor with the return of the veterans.

JUNIOR colleges served as a quick means to the education of GIs who swarmed about college doors. At the peak in the late 1940s New Jersey had 14 junior colleges, several operated on teachers college campuses as independent liberal arts units. In the midst of this unquestioned demand the state got its first city-sponsored junior colleges at Bayonne and Jersey City in 1946 and at Trenton in 1947.

Bayonne Junior College disappeared in the hurly-burly of Hudson County politics of 1951, when declining enrollment and political economy in an election year paired to sound the death knell. Jersey City persists as an extension of the city's public school system, providing education through the 13th and 14th years. This is as close as New Jersey gets to the California philosophy of education where two years of education in public jun-

ior colleges is considered as much a right as kindergarten. Trenton Junior College has continued vigorous since its founding.

These, then, are the sister "community" colleges—Union, Monmouth, Jersey City and Trenton—as differentiated from the five residential junior colleges which attract students from wide areas. The latter—Centenary (Hackettstown), Assumption (Mendham), Immaculate Conception (Lodi), St. Joseph's (Princeton) and Villa Walsh (Morristown)—are not based on educating commuter students and with the exception of Centenary have a further limiting religious emphasis.

EACH of the "community" colleges must be considered as a separate entity. As a start take Union, oldest of the four (by a few weeks over Monmouth). Union knew some bitter days after striking out as a private institution in 1936 but today it looks forward confidently to new buildings on a new campus in Cranford—perhaps by



Junior college sports are limited, but as in Union, there's golf . . .



... and at Monmouth, where one might set his sights on a senior college ...



... or be dedicated to the arts, such as this Trenton sculpture group.

September 1957, certainly by September 1958.

Union remained in Roselle until 1942 when it bought the old Grant School in Cranford and moved there at a time when war beckoned its men students to arms. Registration fell to a low of 75 students at one time—nearly all of them girls—before the postwar student boom sent student population soaring over the 700 mark. Now enrollment has leveled off at about 550 students, half of them full-time day students and the other half part-time evening students.

Dr. Kenneth C. MacKay, president, points out that Union Junior College places heavy emphasis on transferring students to senior colleges. Nearly 90 per cent of all students continue their work beyond Union Junior College, including the part-time night students who pursue their two-year courses at a slower rate because of work-day commitments. Since its founding, Union has graduated more than 1,500 young men and women from its two-year course, with nearly

all of them coming from surrounding Union County.

"We have serious students," Dr. MacKay declares. "We try to have grown-up standards and we emphasize both scholarship and continuance of work beyond junior college. Paradoxically, the greater our success, the more difficult it is to build permanent allegiance on the part of our alumni. Our success is in transferring a student to a senior college, but when we do, often his allegiance goes to the senior college."

IN Long Branch, Monmouth Junior College is ready to occupy its new campus after 23 years of fruitful, if at times confusing, evening sessions in Long Branch High School. Monmouth has purchased the 80-acre "Shadow Lawn" estate in West Long Branch and will move there next summer. Thus will end an old chapter with federal fund beginnings and in its place will arise a new chapter in central Jersey education.

Now, as they have for more than

two decades, Monmouth students must live constantly at the job of sharing facilities with high school students. They enter at 4 p.m., leave at 10 p.m., and between times the school must undergo transition from high school to college and back to high school every day. Ingenious methods of paneling and closeting and scheduling have been vital in maintaining two different institutions in harmonious relationship within the same building.

All will be different at "Shadow Lawn," where Highland Manor Junior College has been operating for several years. The new home of Monmouth Junior College centers in a magnificent 128-room chateau, built on the site of the "Summer White House" where Woodrow Wilson in 1916 accepted his renomination as president of the United States. The colonial mansion of Wilson's time has been replaced by the Indiana limestone chateau (often called the "Versailles of America") built by Woolworth (5&10) president Hubert Parson in the 1920s.

At the new location Monmouth Junior College will have room to grow. The mansion includes such luxuries as bowling alleys, a swimming pool and a theater with 400 seats. Classrooms and administrative offices open off the Great Hall, 95 feet long and 24 feet wide. Students at Monmouth will study under conditions of luxury unmatched on few campuses. In addition to the chateau, six other substantial buildings on the estate can be used as they are readily converted into good college structures.

ALREADY well fixed as far as student body is concerned, with 917 registered last September for the evening classes in the high school, Monmouth expects an enrollment of 1,200 to 1,500 next September. Dr. Edward G. Schlaefer, dean of the college since its founding, expects the college will soon add the third and fourth years and becomes a full-fledged senior college.

Dean Schlaefer says that Monmouth

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... and baseball, with Monmouth and Jersey City in junior league game ...



... as well as basketball, with Union playing the West Point jayvees.

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soon will have 3,000 students. That should cause no surprise. Monmouth County is growing rapidly and good roads extend the range of the college over hundreds of square miles of central Jersey. The new campus can absorb quick growth, the area needs a college badly and Monmouth Junior College has 23 years of sound education behind it.

"We won't abandon our ideals of quality education, regardless of our size," Dean Schlaefer says firmly. "We won't abandon the junior college ideal, either. We'll conduct a junior college program in conjunction with the senior college program. I think the junior college has made the most significant contribution to American higher education in the last century. Junior college and community colleges emphasize student-centered education rather than subject-centered education."

When Monmouth moves, and conducts its classes in the daytime as well as in the evening, Jersey City will be the only New Jersey junior college left with all classes in the evening. Jersey City will also continue as the only junior college in New Jersey embracing the philosophy that advanced public education beyond high school is a right. Tuition for city residents has been free from the start.

JERSEY CITY Junior College came into full-flown vigor overnight when it became apparent in 1946 that many of the city's returned veterans couldn't possibly get into the nation's critically jammed senior college. On the first day of school in 1946, 350 students appeared for classes; by the spring of 1949 enrollment had reached 650 and now enrollment is at a solid figure of about 200.

Like Monmouth through its first 23 years, Jersey City Junior College shares a high school—Lincoln High School. Facilities are excellent and for 10 years high school and college students have been sharing the science laboratories, drawing room, classrooms, swimming pool, auditorium and gymnasium. It isn't easy to change a building from high school to college between 3 and 4 p.m., but it can be



Eager to take places in classrooms are Jersey City "jaycees" shown on Lincoln High steps waiting for completion of regular school day.

done—and it can be fully utilized by students who earnestly desire an education enough to work nights for it.

Trenton Junior College also moved in with a host school after its establishment in 1947. This time the host was the long-established School of Industrial Arts, a city-operated technical school on the corner of W. State and Willow Sts.—only a block from the State Capital and adjacent to the city's best business district. There is no host-guest relationship as there is in utilization of a high school; technical school and junior college share the facilities equally.

PERHAPS no other junior college in the country has quite the intimate state-city relationship that Trenton Junior College has. Its governing board of trustees is appointed by the governor of New Jersey and includes as ex-officio members both the governor and Trenton's mayor. A board of industrial advisers helps guide the junior college's program, working hand in hand with a board of educational advisers composed of principals of neighboring high schools and directors of nursing in the city's hospitals.

Generalizations tend to be too confining but it is possible to boil down the educational philosophies of these four community junior colleges. The stated philosophy of one serves as a good generalization of all: "... to provide two years of post-high school ed-

ucation of high standards to meet the educational needs and desires of students in (the area) and to assist students, by whatever activities are appropriate and feasible, to achieve their maximal development to the end that they shall be happy and effective citizens."

That covers a lot of territory. It includes, first of all, those students who desire two years of college before transferring elsewhere to win bachelor degrees. The four junior colleges here considered can show among them transfers to hundreds of the nation's finest colleges—Rutgers, Princeton, Yale, California, Columbia, Harvard, and so on down the "Who's Who" of colleges. The degree earned on a junior college-senior college basis is every bit as respected, too, even if the first two years do cost considerably less than the last two.

THE definition of purpose also includes the large body of students who want to prepare in two years for specific careers where experience has shown four years are not necessary or even desirable. The range of such careers is broad, opportunities for employment are high, and chances of happiness and success are considerably enhanced by the opportunity to have two years of college study.

Finally, junior colleges serve by giving specific college-level courses to meet exact community requirements. Dr. MacKay of Union has said: "Jun-

ior colleges function on the wide periphery of post-secondary education to meet a wide variety of needs, needs that are ever expanding in our increasingly complex society. Junior colleges are not fettered by the heavy chain of tradition; their classroom walls span the community."

Never overlook the fact that junior colleges have been the only chance available for most of what educators call "the late bloomers." These are young men or women who in senior year in high school or even after graduation suddenly wake up to the fact that they have been wasting their time. Suddenly they want a college education—desperately. Colleges hear them knocking, but they can't come in because their high school credentials show little or no promise.

Junior colleges can, and do, hold forth the chance for the "late bloomers" to get a foothold—and a surprisingly large percentage overcome their weak high school records and go on to solid performances. The difference is desire for learning. Often the poor high school record results from a lack of motivation, a fear that the Army may catch up, or the glamour that surrounds high school athletics and social life rather than academic pursuits.

DESIRE for learning seems to pervade community college halls, for that matter. In the main, community junior college people are students who want to improve themselves; these are young men and women between the ages of 18 and 22 who don't have to sit in college classrooms just to keep warm or to mature. Community junior colleges don't attract the wealthy, the social lions, or the young men of spectacularly trained and scholarship-attracting football muscles.

Junior college social and athletic programs are usually somewhat limited; it isn't easy for night junior colleges to go in for big extracurricular activity sessions. Nonetheless, there are traditional proms and crownings of queens and campus newspapers and yearbooks and similar campus addenda. Jersey City, Union, Monmouth and Trenton have a tight basketball league and Trenton, Jersey City and Monmouth have baseball teams.

Stress is on the academic, nevertheless. Dean Schlaefer of Monmouth, in a recent pamphlet describing Monmouth Junior College, had this to say about the typical Monmouth student (and the description fits any of the four colleges here discussed): "He comes from a modest middle-class home, is attending college with definite purposes of self-improvement, is employed in some gainful employment during his college attendance, pays most of his college expenses from his earnings, would be unable financially to 'go away' to college, and is hesitant about participating in extracurricular activities because of the time they consume."

In short, he goes to college for the purpose of giving the academic side of the college a good and thorough going-over. He does the best he can with what is available, and far more often than not proves that all he needed after all was the chance.

NEXT SUNDAY: Graduate Studies.



Woodrow Wilson Hall, center of new campus when Monmouth moves next fall.

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